

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 16, 2007. Claims 1-7 and 10 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 7 and 10 are independent form. Claims 1, 3, 7 and 10 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1, 6, 7 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,938,154 (Berson) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0163730 (Roskind); Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berson in view of Roskind and U.S. Patent No. 7,117,493 (Matasushima); and Claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berson in view of Roskind, Matasushima and U.S. Patent No. 7,158,657 (Okazaki).

As shown above, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 7 and 10 in terms that more clearly define what he regards as his invention. Applicant submits that these amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed to an authentication method of an image processing system in which a host computer, an authentication apparatus and an image processing apparatus are connected to a network. The method includes: (1) a transmission step of, at the image processing apparatus, transmitting data for specifying the authentication apparatus to the host computer in a case where the host computer remotely operates the image processing apparatus; (2) an authentication step of, at the host computer, causing the authentication apparatus specified by the data to perform an authentication process with respect to an operation level of the remote

operation from the host computer to the image processing apparatus; and (3) a remote operation step of, at the host computer, remotely operating the image processing apparatus in accordance with the operation level authenticated by the authentication apparatus in said authentication step.

Berson relates to a network communication system for secure identification, including a network device, such as a printer, copier, scanner or a facsimile machine, and a network user having an assigned digital certificate. Berson discusses that when the network user sends to the network device a command for operation of the network device and the user's digital certificate, the network device authenticates the digital certificate of the user, and performs the requested operation if the network user is authenticated. Berson does not, however, discuss any authentication apparatus for authenticating a remote operation from a host computer to an image processing apparatus. Applicant has found nothing in Berson that would teach or suggest "a transmission step of, at the image processing apparatus, transmitting data for specifying the authentication apparatus to the host computer in a case where the host computer remotely operates the image processing apparatus," "an authentication step of, at the host computer, causing the authentication apparatus specified by the data to perform an authentication process with respect to an operation level of the remote operation from the host computer to the image processing apparatus" or "a remote operation step of, at the host computer, remotely operating the image processing apparatus in accordance with the operation level authenticated by the authentication apparatus in said authentication step," as recited in Claim 1 (emphasis added).

The Office Action acknowledges (page 3) that Berson does not explicitly disclose transmitting data specifying the authentication apparatus. However, the Office Action states that "Roskind in analogous art, however, discloses transmitting data specifying the authentication

apparatus. (Page 3, paragraph 31) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system disclosed by Berson with Roskind in order to have a distributed authentication system with relatively small size of authentication database. In this way, the user's detailed authentication information is stored only in one participant server's authentication database. (page 3, paragraph 31; Roskind)."

Applicant respectfully disagrees. Roskind relates to a system and method for providing a distributed authentication service. Roskind discusses that a client 101 acquires an IP address of an authentication server. However, the IP address of the authentication server is acquired from a DNS server, i.e., DNS 05. The DNS server is a server different from a participant server from which the client 101 requests a service. In contrast, in the invention recited in Claim 1, data for specifying an authentication apparatus (corresponding to Roskind's authentication server) is transmitted from an image processing apparatus (corresponding to Roskind's participant server) to a host computer (corresponding to Roskind's client 101). Thus, in Roskind, the client 101 receives the IP address of the authentication server from the DNS server, and there is no disclosure of the participant server transmitting information for specifying the authentication server to the client 101.

Thus, Applicant submits that a combination of Berson and Roskind, assuming such combination would even be permissible, would fail to teach or suggest "a transmission step of, at the image processing apparatus, transmitting data for specifying the authentication apparatus to the host computer in a case where the host computer remotely operates the image processing apparatus," as recited in Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record, including Matasushima and Okazaki, has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against Claim 1.

Independent Claims 7 and 10 are system and computer recording medium claims, respectively, corresponding to method Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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FCBS_WS 1732051v1